

1 Samuel 14:4-23 - Thursday, January 30th, 2014

- Last week we ended our study with a video titled, "Miracle at Michmash," from the documentary series, "Against All Odds - Israel Survives."
- It documents two miraculous victories about three thousand years apart at the exact location, the first of which is recorded in 1 Samuel 14.
- The second is recorded in the British War Journal's of World War 1 and, personal memoirs of English Brigadier Major Ian Gilbert in 1917.

- More specifically, December 9th, 1917, which some believe was the fulfillment to the very day of Daniel's prophecy in chapter 12, verse 12.
- Others believe this, 1,335 days is quite possibly a period of judgment for those surviving the tribulation period when they stand before God.
- Be that as it may, for tonight we'll redirect our attention to this battle in 1 Samuel 14 and as such, we'll pick it up beginning in verse four.

(4) Between the passes, by which Jonathan sought to go over to the Philistines' garrison, *there was* a sharp rock on one side and a sharp rock on the other side. And the name of one *was* Bozez, and the name of the other Seneh. (5) The front of one faced northward opposite Michmash, and the other southward opposite Gibeah.

- Here we're told that Jonathan discovers a narrow pathway through two sharp rocks on both sides as a strategic approach to the Philistines.
- Clearly, God supernaturally showed him this pathway, which was mentioned in the video when it was suggested it must be divine guidance.
- The reason I point this out is because I'm of the belief that God would never have supernaturally guided Jonathan were he unwilling to go.

- Let me explain, God won't be party to our disobedience, such that He must out of necessity withhold guidance He knows we won't follow.
- In other words, God will not supernaturally show us that narrow pathway knowing that we have absolutely no intention of following His lead.
- Conversely, like Jonathan, divine guidance comes vis-à-vis the upright integrity of his heart, in that God knew he had the integrity to do it.

Proverbs 11:3 NIV The integrity of the upright guides them, but the unfaithful are destroyed by their duplicity.

Isaiah 26:7 NKJV The way of the just *is* uprightness; O Most Upright, You weigh the path of the just.

(6) Then Jonathan said to the young man who bore his armor, "Come, let us go over to the garrison of these uncircumcised; it may be that the LORD will work for us. For nothing restrains the LORD from saving by many or by few." (7) So his armorbearer said to him, "Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart."

- Two thoughts here with respect to these two men, the first of which is Jonathan, who true to form, displays a remarkable faith in the Lord.
- Secondly, Jonathan's armor bearer who is also displaying a remarkable faith in the Lord, but perhaps more interestingly a faith in Jonathan.
- Here's what I'm thinking, first, Jonathan is putting feet to his faith, as it were, as evidenced by his unflinching fearlessness to move forward.

- I suppose you could say Jonathan knew that faith by itself is dead when it's not accompanied by the action to step out in faith and just do it.
- It's as if Jonathan would say, "you might show me your faith without deeds, but I will show you my faith by what I am willing to actually do.
- The truth of the matter is, the scriptures are replete with exhortations to put our faith where our feet are so-to-speak, and take action on it.

James 2:17-18 NIV In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. (18) But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do.

James 2:26 NIV As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead.

Hebrews 4:2 NIV For we also have had the gospel preached to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because those who heard did not combine it with faith.

K.P. Yohannan in "Living by Faith not by Sight" illustrated it beautifully this way; "...There's a chemistry to take place. For example, when hydrogen is mixed with oxygen in the presence of heat, a chemical reaction takes place and water is produced. Two separate elements, when combined, yield an entirely different result than if they were never mixed. This is true in life as well. There's a chemistry that needs to occur in our lives in what we see, hear and know being mixed with faith. You may have needs or promises from God, but if they are never mixed or combined with the element of faith, you will never see the reaction take place to bring those to fruition."

- A second thought is with respect to Jonathan's armor bearer who is trusting in the Lord and in Jonathan, as they walk by faith and not sight.
- It's important to note that these two men of faith have not yet received their marching orders if you will, such that they don't know if it's God.
- The reason I say that is because here-to-fore, they've only followed God's divine guidance in supernaturally showing them the narrow path.

- As we'll see in the next verses, Jonathan will inquire of the Lord as to whether or not God will grant them victory before he goes into battle.
- This is significant for a couple of reasons, chief of which is that Jonathan knows by faith, God has to do this for them, and instead of them.
- In other words, Jonathan was in no way trusting in his own strength such that he was asking God to bless his plan to attack the Philistines.

- I'm of the belief that it was for this very reason that God would grant Jonathan the victory, in that He could trust Jonathan with the victory.
- This because, Jonathan knew that God plus one was a majority, and in spite of all the odds against them, God plus one meant the victory.
- This suggests that Jonathan was keenly aware of God's Word, particularly in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy chapter 32 verse 30.

Deuteronomy 32:30 NIV How could one man chase a thousand, or two put ten thousand to flight, unless their Rock had sold them, unless the LORD had given them up?

Romans 8:31 NIV What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?

- The implication of both these verses is that God is looking for the Jonathan's to be for so that nothing or nobody can possibly be against us.

One commentator said it this way, "It was not Jonathan that was to work with some help from God; it was the Lord that was to work by, [and be for], Jonathan."

(8) Then Jonathan said, "Very well, let us cross over to *these* men, and we will show ourselves to them. (9) If they say thus to us, 'Wait until we come to you,' then we will stand still in our place and not go up to them. (10) But if they say thus, 'Come up to us,' then we will go up. For the LORD has delivered them into our hand, and this *will be* a sign to us."

- What Jonathan does here is yet another example of his great faith in God to deliver the massive army of the Philistines into Israel's hands.
- Here's why, he does not yet have confirmation that doing this is God's will, which is why he's giving the Him the elbow room to confirm it.
- By that I mean; Jonathan is walking by faith, one step at a time, as he follows what he believes to be the Lord leading him up to this point.

- Some have suggested that Jonathan is doing the very same thing Gideon did when he set a fleece before the Lord in Judges chapter six.
- However, the difference between the two of them is that Gideon already had the direct command and calling of the Lord to go into battle.
- Jonathan on the other hand, has had no such calling or command, which is why he's seeking the Lord as to whether or not he's to proceed.

(11) So both of them showed themselves to the garrison of the Philistines. And the Philistines said, "Look, the Hebrews are coming out of the holes where they have hidden." (12) Then the men of the garrison called to Jonathan and his armorbearer, and said, "Come up to us, and we will show you something." Jonathan said to his armorbearer, "Come up after me, for the LORD has delivered them into the hand of Israel."

- This is interesting for a number of reasons not the least of which is that there was a greater likelihood the Philistines would've come down.
- The reason I find this interesting is because this may very well be how Jonathan knew it would be the Lord if they told them to come up.
- For the Philistines to say come up to us and we will teach you a lesson instead of saying we'll come down there had to have been the Lord.

- Also, for them to go up instead of the Philistines coming down would have been infinitely more difficult for Jonathan and his armor bearer.
- The reason I point this out is because often times we want God to confirm His will to us by having it be the easier path of least resistance.
- I believe Jonathan knew the Lord would deliver the Philistines into the hands of Israel by virtue of the odds being against this happening.

(13) And Jonathan climbed up on his hands and knees with his armorbearer after him; and they fell before Jonathan. And as he came after him, his armorbearer killed them. (14) That first slaughter which Jonathan and his armorbearer made was about twenty men within about half an acre of land. (15) And there was trembling in the camp, in the field, and among all the people. The garrison and the raiders also trembled; and the earth quaked, so that it was a very great trembling.

- If there were any doubt as to whether or not the Lord was about to give them the victory, this earthquake would've certainly taken care of it.
- And, furthermore, if there any doubt as to why the Lord was about to give them the victory, the earthquake would take care of that as well.
- The reason being is God was rewarding Jonathan for diligently seeking Him and trusting Him, by faith, to deliver them from the Philistines.

Hebrews 11:6 NIV And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Henry Morris - "An earthquake was apparently timed by God in answer to Jonathan's faith, causing enough fear and confusion in the Philistine garrison to enable Jonathan and his armor-bearer to destroy them – partly because the Philistine warriors also began fighting each other.

(16) Now the watchmen of Saul in Gibeah of Benjamin looked, and *there* was the multitude, melting away; and they went here and there. (17) Then Saul said to the people who *were* with him, "Now call the roll and see who has gone from us." And when they had called the roll, surprisingly, Jonathan and his armorbearer *were* not *there*. (18) And Saul said to Ahijah, "Bring the ark of God here" (for at that time the ark of God was with the children of Israel). (19) Now it happened, while Saul talked to the priest, that the noise which *was* in the camp of the Philistines continued to increase; so Saul said to the priest, "Withdraw your hand."

- Here we're told that meanwhile back under the shade of the pomegranate tree, Saul learns of the multitude of Philistines melting in fear.
- His response is interesting because he takes a roll call to figure out who amongst the Israelites had gone to battle against the Philistines.
- Much to their surprise, it was King Saul's own son, Jonathan, and his armor bearer. To me, what Saul does next is even more interesting.

- Namely, he has the ark of God brought to him so as to discern whether or not they should join Jonathan and his armor bearer in the battle.
- The problem with both responses on the part of Saul is they appear spiritual outwardly, but it may be he's covering his carnality inwardly.
- Here's how I get there, Saul taking a roll call seems to imply that he was more concerned about whoever was leading this taking the credit.

- Then, secondly, Saul has the ark of God brought to him so as to have the outward appearance of being spiritual in seeking the Lord's will.
- The problem with this response is God had already made it known to Jonathan that it was his will as evidenced by the noise in the camp.
- In other words, it continued to get so loud that Saul finally acquiesces to leaving the comfort of his pomegranate tree and go into the battle.

(20) Then Saul and all the people who *were* with him assembled, and they went to the battle; and indeed every man's sword was against his neighbor, *and there was* very great confusion. (21) Moreover the Hebrews *who* were with the Philistines before that time, who went up with them into the camp *from the* surrounding *country*, they also joined the Israelites who *were* with Saul and Jonathan. (22) Likewise all the men of Israel who had hidden in the mountains of Ephraim, *when* they heard that the Philistines fled, they also followed hard after them in the battle. (23) So the LORD saved Israel that day, and the battle shifted to Beth Aven.

- This is sort of pathetic if you really think about it. The reason I say this is Saul, and all the men who hid in fear, only now join in the battle.
- Only when they see that the victory is at hand do they come out from hiding, or sitting under their pomegranate tree, and do something.
- You probably know where I'm going with this so I'll close by saying I want to be Jonathan who doesn't wait for someone to boldly trust God.